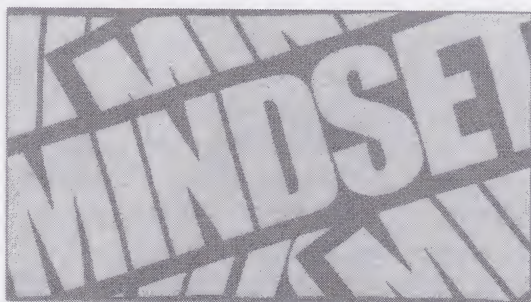


ZINE X OF STRENGTH



Interview with MD Straight
Edge band 'MINDSET'

Perspective on the culture
of violence

Spotlight on Baltimore's
Charm City Art Space

Moment with Mike Clarke

plus 2 all new sections!

Perspective

Here we are at the end of 2015. A year thus far in which there has been, at least, more mass shootings than days...

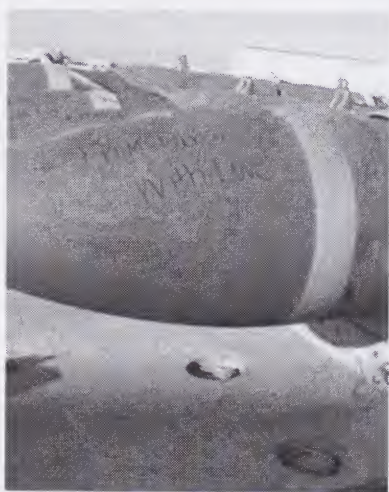
20 days of this year alone have seen 4 or more shootings take place within a single day. 2013 and 2014 were of the same trend, there was nearly a mass shooting everyday in the U.S. And I can't even begin to constrain my thoughts on the cultivation of violence in this country, or how we have become so systematically inured to the massive scale of lives lost each time we turn on the news and see another mass shooting. And not a day goes by that I don't feel heavy heart ache over such. I can't stand to see the grotesque effects produced from such extreme hate, and I can no longer continue to feign the happiness I project to anyone I meet or associate with because of this. All this pain and rage that I continue to masquerade as hope, day after trying day, is

*"All this pain
and rage that
I continue to
masquerade
as hope..."*

becoming futile. Sometimes I feel I don't have the strength in me anymore to do so. I try as hard as I can, but this feeling is inexorable. I am tormented by the things I have had to see, and the things I continue to see. For I am unfortunately not removed from the situation because I know first hand what bullets can do to human flesh. The greater part of 2007 I volunteered as an EMT on an ambulance team

in Occupied Palestine during conflict situations within The West Bank. And there will probably be no greater painful experience in my life than that unconscionable situation, and what I had to live through there. To begin to even think of the situation there I become lachrymose. And I have tried to bury some of my experiences there but I just can't, it isn't possible. Talking about it only makes it worse. Besides I don't have the heart to narrate any of the horrors I experienced there, and you probably don't have the stomach to handle hearing them, but the violence became too much to possibly handle the moment I had to outrun gunfire holding a 9 year old girl who was bleeding out. I was lucky though, I got out! But this is everyday life for a lot of people, and lets not forget that. We have the privilege of sitting back and hearing these things relayed second hand, but somewhere off, people are living that reality, and it's beyond any imaginable hell our feeble, frail minds can conceive.

But it's something we prevaricate with to placate our puerile antics on how we view the world and the pain there of. Albeit the gestation behind this seraphic view of the world for me was obliterated the first time I felt the sound barrier being broke (I was 50 meters away from a one ton bomb that was dropped as a token of collective punishment over the innocuous presence of a people who merely think different). And I was reminded of this when I saw the messages written on U.S. bombs headed for Syria recently. For the way we perceive ideological separation as a threat and meet it with violence is disturbing, worse when we meet violence with compounded violence. But we are emotive beings and often we are sold on the idea on how we feel, and how we react to shock. 9/11 was orchestrated and without fully examining evidence the U.S. illegally invaded Iraq. We sat in horror as we watched close to 3 thousand innocent American people lose their life, but shed not a single tear when close to 500,000 innocent Iraqis lost their life on account of the invasion. It's this level of violence that we condone that drives me to lose hope in believing in a sustainable future going forward. It is this type of violence that should drive us to no longer, in good conscious, continue to praise the barbarians who orchestrate the symbolic and material apparatus that leverages control on the marginalized populations created by neoliberalism and the profiting from this culture of violence. And regrettably this type of violence is coming uncomfortably closer to home. We got a pervasive war going down on our streets, inundating our news everyday with reports of aggravated assault, rape and homicide. Year in, year out, violent crime is consistently high, gun control continues to be a travesty, and our suicide rate has been continually climbing as a perceived way out from this forlorn world. So while I could go on and on continuing to drub you with emetic statistics, what would be the point if all it did was just produce potential energy? At what point does the standard deviation in the way we measure human life actually have to shift in order to catalyze kinetics? It's sad how lives are reduced to a number, simplified to a state so basal it essentially means nothing. Something is terribly amiss when the qualities of what it actually means to exist are forgotten. This culture of violence that we as a whole have to come to so readily accept and nurture is nauseating, consigning us to oblivion and ushering in our bane.



A sickening display of violence compounding violence. Days after the Paris shooting, U.S. bombs were dropped with this message written.

So I'll say it again, here we are, 2015, but what's to be going forward? Can we not deviate from the course already set in motion? Are we not capable of believing in the equality of all sentient life forms? Has our elegy already begun to be read? Remember *"the battlefield lays in our hearts and minds,"* and far from being quixotic, a radical shift in thought is capable of. It just takes courage, and I am not asking you to be the martyr but rather just another iconoclast. And I'll leave you with this, but when I was in Baltimore reflecting on the 9/11 monument, a lady walked up to me asking for a cigarette. I told her I didn't smoke and she said *"yeah me neither, but I need one right now."* Not one to ever pry, but I was curious so I inquired why and she said; *"because my boys father has just been shot and I don't know how to tell him his daddy is gone."* Taken aback, I offered my sincerest condolences and we got to talking about life, and violence in the city. And while it focused on the plight of Baltimore, she left me with this, *"but at the end of the day, I draw hope from this city because I see how it comes back from tragedy, you can't break it, and that's something to follow."* So I collected my thoughts, and if this lady (a victim of violent crime), and her son (who just lost his father to this culture of senseless violence), both residents from Dunbar, a place where one has a 1 in 9 chance in becoming a victim of violent crime can continue to draw hope, there is no reason why I can't. So even though I am not from Palestine, and I am not from Baltimore, as much as the realities of these places can bring me to my knees in sorrow, the hope they offer will be enough to get me back up every time. So while we may have a deeply entrenched culture of violence in this world, there is still hope for each and every one of us to be the agent of change. Through our collective scrutinized actions, we can be the change we want to see, we can be the ones to put an end to this trend. We just can't lose our hope in doing so.

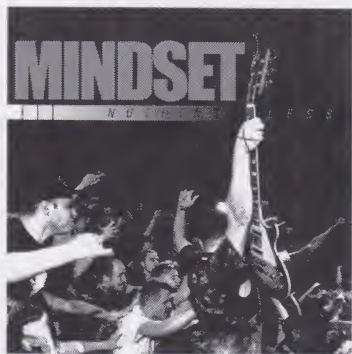


Interview

A band that needs no introduction, MINDSET has been one of the most crucial hardcore bands since their inception. Hard to see them go but pleased to have had this conversation, and entirely grateful for everything they did for this community.

1. First off, just to clear the air, what were the reasons to lay this band to rest, and was it sudden, or had you guys seen it coming?

We've been planning the end of the band for over a year at this point, but we wanted to wrap everything up in a way that felt right. It was also important to us to release a final record and be able to play a handful of great shows before we called it quits. In our minds, we're confident in the impact we've left and satisfied with what we've done as a band. Satisfaction is an alien concept for us, we've always had to fight for everything we've achieved and now that we feel content there's no point in keeping it going. We've got nothing left to fight for and want to go out at our peak.



MINDSET's final 7" "Nothing Less" will be released on vinyl soon through React! Records and available for pre-order January 2016

2. And looking back on your tenure, what are some of the things you can say everyone is most proud of from this band?

I'm most proud that MINDSET was a band that was honest and sincere, and that even though I was the one speaking, every member stood behind what I said and believed it. We lived it. We weren't a concept band or a side project, we never phoned in a show, and we gave it everything we had every time. We did it our way and did it ourselves since day one, and never compromised our vision.

3. Aside from everyone's hometown, what were some of MINDSET's favorite cities to play and why?

Some of my favorite cities to play over the years are Boston, Detroit, anywhere in California, anywhere in Germany, London, Seattle and

Interview continued...

Atlanta. Anywhere with good food and good people. It's really special to have been able to travel to so many different places and meet so many great people who share a common interest.

4. Now identity and ethos are pretty important for me when it comes to being a great band, and the one thing I have loved most about MINDSET is that you guys never really changed your sound or style, so how important are identity and ethos?

Our identity as a band was incredibly important to us since the beginning and something we worked diligently to maintain. I always say we confined ourselves into a very small and very specific box, and over time as we reached the edges of what could be defined as "in the box" we expanded it without stepping out of it. Musically, aesthetically, lyrically--we stayed true to the original concept and I feel like we were able to add something new to the genre. I feel compelled to add that I think it worked so well for us because for the five of us, given the choice, this is exactly the kind of band we'd want to be in. No one was faking the funk. We all bring something interesting to the band, stylistically, but share the same vision. More importantly, the ethos of the band was our guiding light. Without substance, there's no style. Form follows function! MINDSET was built on a foundation of D.I.Y. punk ethics: self reliance, self awareness, and self empowerment. We are / were outspoken advocates of straight edge, vegetarianism, equality, and pursuing a positive and peaceful existence. Without all of that, we're just cool t-shirts.



5. Personally I am very thankful for this band, I feel you guys did everything right, and one thing in particular was you guys came out every time, and right from the start, reminded kids this is about unity and having fun, and that violence is never welcome. But as a band did you guys ever feel the need to address larger issues or topics, either surfacing within this community or the world at large?

I feel like not only did we address many larger issues lyrically (vegetarianism, consumerism, homophobia, religious fundamentalism, violence, etc.) we also live our lives in a way that reinforces the culture and choices we're promoting. We're a band, our songs are our protest. We're also a great soundtrack for stagediving.

6. Collectively, the lyrics to "Leave No Doubt," resonate very deeply about the world we live in. However I am always curious as what were the factors behind the writing process, and where the spark that ignited the content came from?



A pin for every city MINDSET has ever played.

The lyrics to Leave No Doubt were written during a very intense time in my life when I was trying to understand the world and my place in it. MINDSET lyrics are reactions to my own discontent, whether within myself or the world around me. I've always written as a way to clarify my own ideas, but also to motivate myself to be the person I strive to be. I tried to write a record that was both introspective and socially conscious.

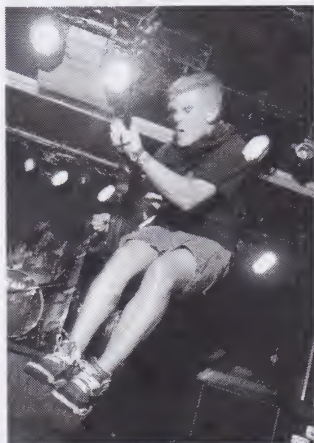
7. Lastly, what's next for everyone in MINDSET?

We've all found ourselves at pretty pivotal moments in our lives. Lots of adult stuff: having kids, buying homes, building careers. But at the same time we're all hardcore lifers and starting new projects. Dan is in a lot of bands, Turnstile, Angel Du\$t and Praise. Probably others I'm forgetting. Chris and Austin are also in Praise and they have a new record coming out soon. Austin is also in Line of Sight, Clear and Free. I'm shifting a lot of my energy to running REACT! Records but I'm also working on a new band with Andy and Anthony from Praise called Nerve Endings and we're recording a demo in January '16! Mike keeps mentioning a 2nd Peace 7" so we'll see about that...

MINDSET's remaining show schedule heading into Spring 2016. Do your best in trying to hit as many of these last shows as possible, because this is it, and once it's gone, it's gone. And there's no harder thing than looking at an old show flyer and wishing you hadn't missed it. Thinking of what you would have given to have been there.

Moment

This issues contributed piece comes from Mike Clark, guitarist and one of the founding members of MINDSET. He was generous enough to share some old photos and give a few words to the bands history.



MINDSET officially began in the late months of 2007 - when we transitioned from calling ourselves the Anti Wastoids, to MINDSET. I really think of the two as separate bands, but also the same, you couldn't have one without the other, but they are distinctly different. AW started in 2005 and was 4 kids goofing around, having fun, going to shows, trying to play them when promoters would put us on, and it was our chance to cut our teeth on how to be in a band. As we got more serious, the band kind of morphed with us, and the name change occurred, but the band really changed as well. The best way I can describe it is, with MINDSET we were on a

mission, and that hasn't changed in 9 years. I think we've always had a chip on our shoulder for better or for worse, and that has fueled our drive. We never wanted to let that drive slow down, or for things to teeter out, so as MINDSET has run it's course, we wanted to make sure that we went out with a full head of steam and killed it before it had a chance to fade out. I'm looking forward to seeing what all of us create next. That's what makes me excited; none of us are dropping out, none of us are bored, none of us are breaking edge, or over hardcore - MINDSET is ending, but hardcore is better than ever and I'm excited to see what's to come next!

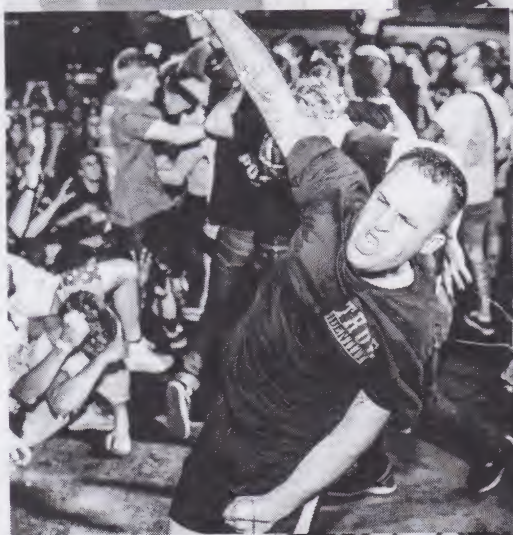


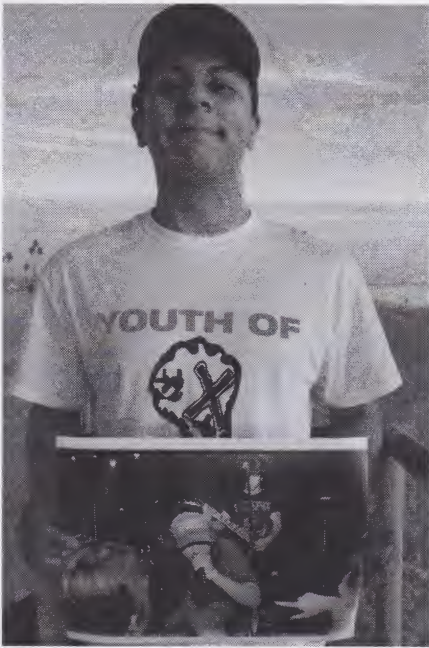


Expression

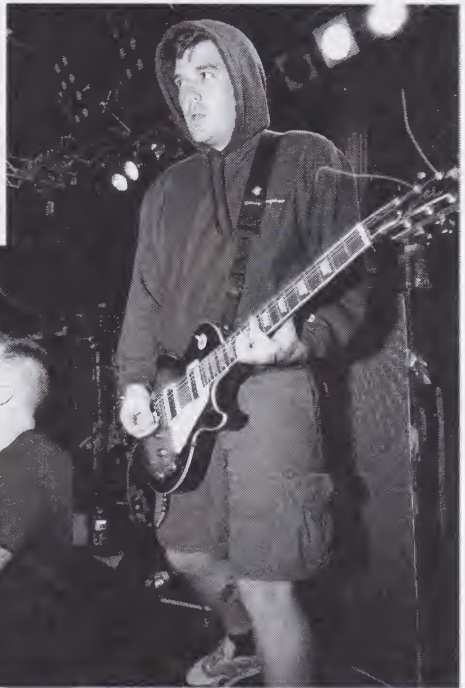


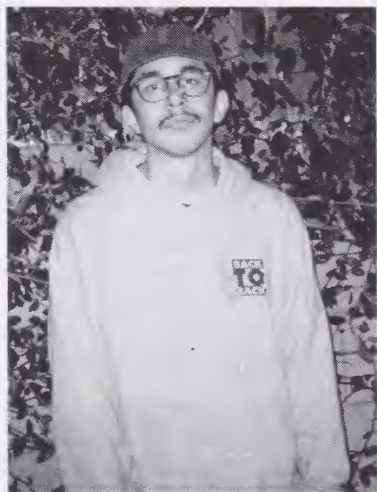
Kiabad Meza is a 20 year old, self taught photographer who has been shooting hardcore shows for a little over 2 years. Aside from photography, he also does graphic design and plans to release 2 zines in 2016 and depending on how things go, possibly open a DIY venue. He is a Proud Del Taco enthusiast, and his work can be found on his IG account "[kiabadmeza](#)" along with his Tumblr account at [kiabadmeza.tumblr.com](#) and you can reach him at kiabad@hotmail.com.





Arron Herrera is a 20 year old photographer based in Los Angeles. With the help of photography courses, he has a deep passion for film photography and the beauty of the work behind it. He will be releasing a zine, "Primitive Exposures" at the beginning of next year. It will consist of a year-long experience taking photos at hardcore shows along with street photography. His goal for next year is to be able to build his own darkroom, work from home, and be able to teach those who are wanting to learn and use a darkroom as well. You can follow his work on IG at: [arronherrera](https://www.instagram.com/arronherrera) and Tumblr: <http://arronherrera.tumblr.com>.





Miguel Del Angel is a freelance photographer from Moreno Valley. He is currently going to community college and working on getting his AA degree. You can find his work on his IG account "miguelrdelangel" and on Flickr at www.flickr.com/mdelangel along with his Tumblr at miguelrdelangel.tumblr.com.



Spotlight

It seems like no matter where you look an all ages venue is coming under threats to close, and this isn't a good thing! With a scarcity of all ages venues as it is already, this community cannot afford to lose another.

And one such venue is Baltimore's prized 'Charm City Art Space' which was forced to move out of its prior location due to unforeseen circumstances and is currently without a location. CCAS is a unique space dedicated to serving the visual and performing arts in central Baltimore. The goal is to *"provide a space for artists and musicians from all over to showcase their work in our fine city."* It is run as a collective with a small membership fee that is dedicated to financing the space. There are two membership levels, that of Staffer and Promotor. The space is ran completely DIY style and has been the home to many Baltimore greats like Trapped Under Ice, Turnstile, and Praise since its inception in 2002. Free from drugs and alcohol, and the negative energies of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and ageism, the space is also vehemently anti-violence and exists as a place where open minded individuals can show up, have fun, and engage in independent thought, constructive discussion, and creative expression. Always at the forefront of community awareness and involvement, be it from coming up with conflict resolution plans or advocating an end to street harassment, CCAS has also won numerous awards from Baltimore's City Paper. The importance of CCAS cannot be stressed enough, and finding a new location to operate under is crucial for the city of Baltimore and its youth. Email charmcityartspace@gmail.com to see how you can get involved.

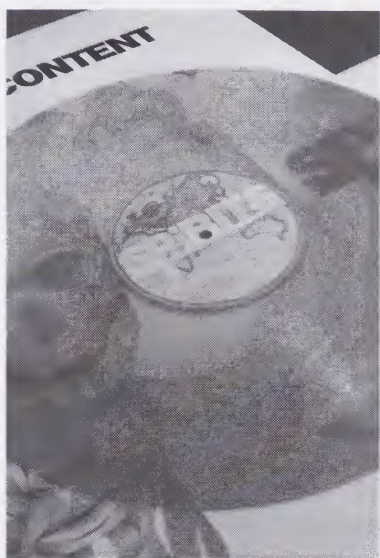


CCAS needs your help, and the greatest way you can help is by donation! Please visit www.ccspace.org to make a donation. Collectively if we all come together and pledge a small donation it will add up enough to where CCAS can find a new spot to call home!

Creation

Spirits is a straight edge hardcore band hailing from Boston, MA. They recently just released their debut LP, and they were kind enough to contribute a narrative piece chronicling the process behind the construction of the album.

Our writing process as a band is probably pretty similar to a lot of other bands. Most of the time someone in the band will bring an idea to the table at a band practice, whether it's a guitar or bass riff or maybe something along the lines of *"I really like how [insert song from a band we like] feels or the energy it conveys musically"*



Close up view of the wax pattern on "Discontent"

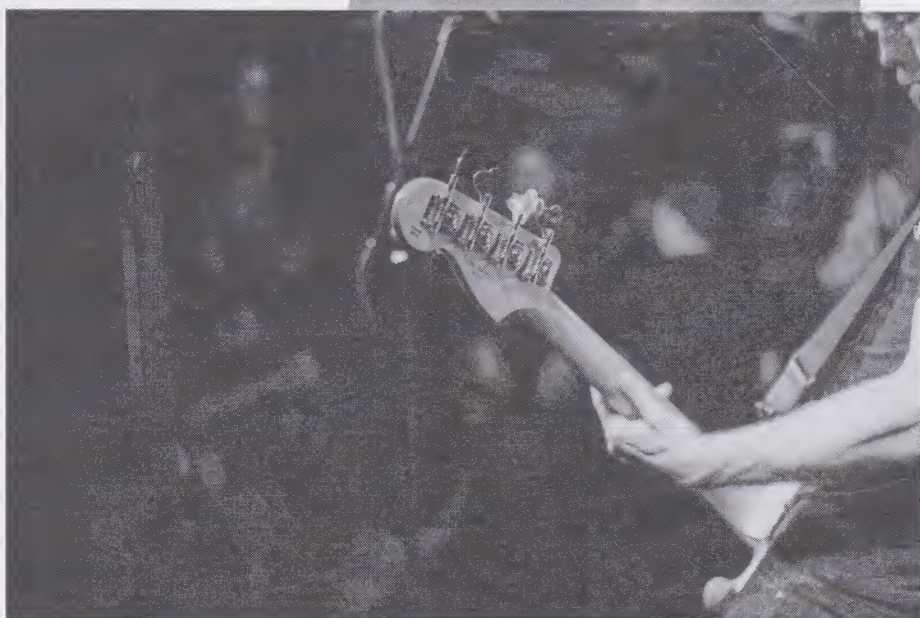
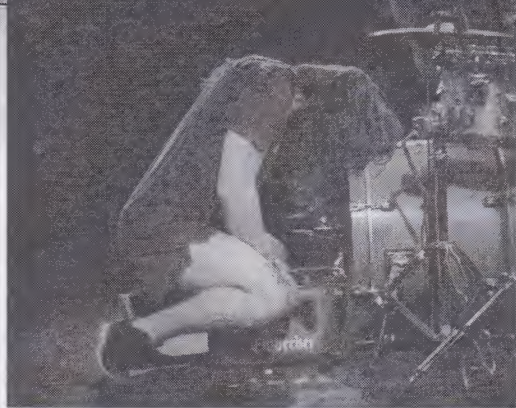
and we will try to emulate that in our own writing. It's usually a pretty organic process and in such a short time of us playing together as a band we can usually tell whether or not a song will come out of an idea or not. If something isn't jelling we will most definitely set that idea to the side (perhaps to revisit later) and move onto the next idea. On other occasions, someone will bring a mostly complete song to practice and we will possibly change a part here and there and let everyone add their 2 cents into it. For instance, the second song on our LP "Days Of Light" was a song that I had written like 8 years ago and had been sitting on it for years. I brought it to practice, we ditched the intro of it and changed the outro a bit and that was

that...finished song in like 30 minutes. For "Displaced" we were just messing around between songs in a practice and I came up with that bass intro riff. Everyone in the room dug it, so we wrote the rest of the song around that riff on the spot. So there's definitely no formula or set in stone process we follow other than our instincts and personal taste. If everyone in the band digs a riff or song then we keep it, if someone has some reservations or isn't into it, we change it or ditch the idea, pretty simple!

When it comes to recording, we tend to be a pretty DIY focused band as a few members have audio engineering backgrounds. For our 7" EP, we recorded everything at our practice space and mixed the 5 songs at home. For the LP, we did drums at a studio here in Boston called Q-Division and then did the bass/guitars/vocals all by ourselves in our practice space like the 7". Being able to record things ourselves really lets us kind of do whatever we want so that's super convenient. The LP was a pretty hectic task though as we had to have it completely finished in like a 3 week span so that we could send it into the pressing plant in order to have copies for our European Tour last May. We did 18 songs on drums in 1 day at Q, then Charles and I worked crazy hours between our jobs and other commitments in life to get everything knocked out as quickly as possible. I think you can kind of hear the urgency on the record so it gives it a cool vibe but it definitely would have been nice to have a little more time to work on it. Overall I think we're all pretty happy with how it turned out though, so no complaints here! The artwork for the LP was actually completely not what we had intended it to be. Originally, we had a completely different layout in mind with a different artist who was going to do the whole layout. He ended up bailing last minute on us because of how busy he was so we kind of had to scramble to come up with something in a very short amount of time. From the onset, we had wanted the packaging to be some sort of multi-layer arrangement and we started throwing ideas around for what could work. We had decided on "Discontent" as the name of the record, thanks to a fortune cookie Mike had opened. From there the idea morphed into this kind of unhappy/miserable person on the cover, and then I thought of the muscle/skull revealed in the other layers and it all just came together.



We hand assembled every copy including having to glue all the wraps and everything involved in it, so it was quite a time consuming project at the end of the day. In Mike's words, his influences in writing lyrics range from dealing with everyday life, struggling with depression, the concept of time, the "American dream", and other various things like the influence straight edge has had on him as a person, along with themes of addiction, police brutality, and the lies you are told growing up about what will make you happy. We typically will finish a song musically as a band and then he will just listen to it on repeat for a few days to write some lyrics or to see what ideas and words might fit into it. Then we'll reconvene, start putting them into the song and make small changes here and there if other people in the band have ideas or thoughts on them. As with most things in this band, it's a pretty cooperative effort to make sure that everyone is happy with the end result. Thankfully there weren't any problems other than having to scrap one of the songs because our drummer Kevin ended up recording it way too fast. It was one of the last songs we did in the marathon day and by then we were all just ready to be done with it. He ripped through the song and after listening to it back in the following days it was apparent that the song was just not right at that tempo. Hopefully we will put it onto the next LP as it's a pretty solid jam. At the end of the day though we were all really happy with the end result and with how everything came together for Discontent. Sure there are little things that I wish were different, but they're mostly sonic changes that are just the result of being an overly picky audio engineer. Ha! We've been relatively quiet the last few months but have been up to a lot of stuff behind the scenes. We have a handful of releases scheduled for early 2016 starting off with a split CD coming out in Brazil. It has 3 new songs and an upgraded version of our Cranberries "Salvation" cover on it. Those 4 songs are also going to get pressed as a split 7" by Speed-o-Wax in the UK but with a different band. Then we have a different set of 3 new songs that are going to be released as a split 7" by a German label (I think?) with a band from Europe. And last but not least, we recorded one more new song that will be coming out on an international youth-crew/hardcore comp sometime next year. Now that we've finally finished getting all of those releases going, we've been writing for LP number 2 and currently have 15-20 songs/ideas in the works. The plan is to sort through all that in the next month or so and to then record the LP early next year so that we can have it finished and out by mid-summer to coincide with 3-4 weeks of touring in Europe in July/August. Other than that, we're trying to sort out some more shows and tours including some weekends down the East Coast and hopefully a week or so down the West Coast if we can figure it out. So staying busy to say the least, but we really wouldn't have it any other way! - Robert, 12/6/15





You can find Spirits on Instagram at "spiritsxboston" along with Facebook by searching Spirits.

Most importantly you can buy everything Spirits has released thus far on their Bandcamp page. <https://spiritsxxx.bandcamp.com/album/s-t>



*To everything that you gave,
To everything that you said,
To everything that you did,*

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you...



MINDSET

2008 - 2016

This issue is dedicated to the City of Baltimore, and to anyone who has ever had to struggle with something they thought they couldn't handle. Help is always there, just have hope.

About this zine...

This zine promotes a positive lifestyle through the abstinence of drugs and alcohol. We believe that an intoxicated society is detrimental in making informed and conscious decisions, and that the eradication of apathy and liberation of society is gained first with one's own mind, body, and soul. We are also dedicated to eliminating animal abuse, neglect, and exploitation through education, community involvement and direct action. This compassion extends to all animals, and we encourage everyone to implement a compassionate philosophy into their own life by adopting a vegetarian/vegan diet and using cruelty-free products. We are also, without compromise, anti-violence and anti-war. Overt aggression is inexcusable and we believe should be intolerable; it ruins our scene and the greater world we live in. And this zine will forever be a platform for safety, equality, and unity regardless of one's race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, abilities, or background. Here is where all will receive the respect they deserve, and any discriminate, xenophobic, homophobic, sexist, racist or transphobic language or action within our scene will not be tolerated and spoken against. Equality amongst all, and liberation for everyone. Lastly, this zine will never seek to profit off of hardcore, and will always, until in press, be disseminated free of charge. And whatever costs arise in the publishing of this zine will fall strictly on the behalf of the organizers. All that being said, we'll see you at the show. So mosh hard, but mosh responsible, be open to ideas and respectful of differences, make new friends and take care of the old ones, keep hardcore alive by supporting your local scene, and always, have respect for this community and its affiliates.

Until always,

ZINE X OF STRENGTH

Contact Zine of Strength at zineofstrength@gmail.com

Visit us at zineofstrength.tumblr.com

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"I won't tell you what to do, just how I feel

I wish you'd make a choice and make it soon..."